Accidents in Air Force

748. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that accidents in the Air Force are increasing;

(b) if so, the steps taken to minimise the accidents; and

(c) whether any sabotage is taking place in the training centres?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The number of flying accidents of IAF which was about 30 per year in the previous decade, has fallen to an average of 22 accidents per year in the current decade. There have been only 13 accidents in the IAF during 1997-98 which is the lowest figure since the formation of the IAF.

However, every accident in the IAF is investigated by a Court of Inquiry. Inquiries have revealed that the main cause of flying accidents are Human Error, Technical Defects and Bird Strike. A High Powered Committee under the Chairmanship of Scientific Advisor to Raksha Mantri has done an in-depth study of the accidents and has made certain recommendations to reduce the number of accidents. A task Team has been constituted to ensure the time bound implementation of the recommendations of the High Powered Committee. Further, steps are also being taken by the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment and the State Governments concerned for modernisation of slaughter houses/carcass utilisation centres and for sanitisation of areas around airfield to reduce bird activities.

(c) There is no case reported of any sabotage in the training centres.

Participation in pay disparities agitation

749. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain IAF persons belonging to the technical wing were allegedly tortured for their participation in the pay disparities agitation;

(b) if so, whether Government have enquired into the matter to know the factual position;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what action has been taken by Government in the even of the allegations of torture found to be true?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) Air Hqrs have reported that there was no torture of personnel belonging to technical wing. Government have however, received some petitions which are under examination.

Special drive to recruit youths in Army

750. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO:
DR. MOHAN BABU;
SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to launch a special drive to recruit youths in Army;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of places where recruitment drive is likely to be started during the current financial year, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Recruitment in Army is carried out in open rallies regularly and response to these rallies is very satisfactory.

(c) Does not arise.

Accidents of ageing IAF aircrafts

751. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief of Air Staff had expressed concern over accidents due to technical defects in some of the IAF's ageing aircrafts; and

(b) if so, the efforts being made to improve the design features of the ageing aircrafts to extend their life?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.